A Note on the Antiquity of Chittagong, compiled from the Tibetan works

Pagsam Jon-Zań of Sumpa Khan-po and Kāhbab Dun-dan of Lama

Tārā Nātha.—By Sarat Chandra Das, C.I.E., Rai Bahādur.

## [Read February, 1897.]

About the close of the 6th century A.D. when Çrī Harṣa reigned in Kaçmīr,¹ in the north, the brother of king Prabhāsa, named Çākyabala, brought under his sway the country between Haridvāra and Kaçmīr. He accepted as his spiritual teacher Ācārya Vasumitra, the author of the commentary of the Mahākōça and also of the works on the religious theories of the eighteen sects of the early Buddhists. In the south Dēva Çrama, a pupil of Dharma Rakṣita, who had written the Mūla Prajñā Tīkā, gained the victory in a disputation with some Tīrthika (Brāhmaṇa) Pandits, and succeeded in converting king Sālavāhana to Buddhism. Afterwards in the reign of the fifth Simha, the Tīrthika teacher called Dattatri appeared.² Shortly afterwards the Brāhmaṇa Pandits, called Kumāra-līla and Kaṇāda, defeated the pupils of the Buddhist sage Diṇ-nāga and others. When Çamkar-ācārya, who, it is said, could see

<sup>1</sup> दे क्षा भे प्राप्त प्र प्राप्त प्राप्त

Then the Pāla dynasty of the solar race (Sūryavamça) consisting of fourteen kings came in succession. At that time in Kaçmīr there ruled Çrī Harṣa Dēva.

2 (२०८१ वे. १२५१) इर्ग क्षेत्र क्षेत

(Pagsam Jon-Zan, 105.)

the god Mahādēva whenever he wished, came to Bengal, the elderly Buddhist Bhiksus wished to call the demigods who guarded Buddhism in other lands to their aid, but the youthful Buddhist Pandits, not listening to their advice, held religious controversy with Camkara and were defeated.3 They lost twenty-five endowed religious institutions together with their furniture and other properties; and 500 Buddhist Upāsakas were converted to the creed of the Tirthikas (Brāhmaņas). When Camkar-ācārya sent his letter of challenge to Nālanda to hold a religious disputation with him, Dharma Kīrtti 4 was brought from the Dekhan by king Prabhāsa. In the great controversy which was held at Benares between the Brāhmaņas and the Buddhists in which the king presided, Pandit Dharma Kirtti gained the victory. All the people interested in the controversy became converted to Buddhism. king, having been converted, established a large number of Buddhist institutions. Though defeated, Camkara did not embrace Buddhism. After his death which occurred by drowning himself in the Ganges, his followers were mostly converted to Buddhism,

In Ōṭivisa (Orissa) Çamkara's disciple, a Brāhman named Bhaṭṭācārya, became powerful. He defeated the Buddhist Pandit Kuliça Çrēṣṭha and others in disputation, with the result that the Buddhist temples were destroyed by the Tīrthikas, and their endowed properties appropriated to the use of the latter. In the east Vimala Candra, son of Bāla Candra, had established his power over

³ देथेरकैंर व्राथवादराष्ट्रराष्ट्रीरथेर्गाराष्ट्रारथार्थेद्रायाः च्यायाः व्यविकायः व्यविकायः विकायः विकायः व्यविकायः विकायः व

(Pagsam Jon-Zan, 106.)

Dharma Kirtti and Gam-po king of Tibet were said to be of the same time.

Gam-po married the daughter of Emperor Thai Jung of China, who according to Chinese chronology reigned in 600 A.D.

(Pagsam Jon-Zan, 107.)

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Bāla Candra was the son of Simha Candra who reigned in Bengal. Bāla Candra extended his power to Tirhut and Kāmarūpa. At this time Magadha was ruled by the elder son of King Harṣa.

his possession the stolen goods, and so they took him to the king, who sentenced him to be impaled. The sage was fixed to the stake, and there he remained still and motionless as in yoqa. When necessary, he used to get away to make ablution in the river, and then again quietly resumed his seat on the stake. On the seventh day of his impalement the king came to inspect the scene. Seeing that the sage sat unhurt on the stake, he became unhappy for the wrong he had done to one who was guiltless and holy. He became a devout follower of Bālapāda, who was so called on account of his child-like simplicity of character.<sup>6</sup> From Malava the sage proceeded to the kingdom of Bengal which was ruled by Gōpī Candra, a son of king Vimala Candra. Gōpī Candra was young when he became king. Being a handsome person, he was very coquettish in his manners. He often used to behold his beautiful face in the mirror. The sage Bālapāda visited Jālandhara (probably the modern Sītākunda), where flames of fire were seen in the midst of water and stone. Coming to the city of Cātigrāma, he entered the king's orchard and sat meanly attired in meditation at the foot of some trees. It is said that when he felt thirsty, he summoned the cocoa-nuts that were on the tree to come to his lips. They came and, pouring into his mouth their watery contents, returned at his bidding to their respective The mother of the king observed this curious phenomenon with wonder, and knowing that the sage who looked mean like a Hādi (sweeper of roads) was a Siddha, she asked her royal son to call the sage to his presence to get some charms by which he might gain longevity. sage whispered a mantra into the king's ears, and at the same time asked him to put his hand in an empty earthen pot. "Do you perceive anything in it?" asked the sage. "No, nothing" was the reply.

<sup>6</sup> ជិខាត្រាក្ត់ ឬកុសាត ឝ្ថិសាសាលា មួល មួល បង្ក្លើក គឺជាប្រុក្ស ក្លាំ មួយ ក្រុក ក្លាំ មួយ ក្រុក ក្លាំ មើល ក្រុក ក្លាំ មើល ក្លាំ មើល ក្រុក ក្កិត ក្រុក ក្រុក

Thrice the same interrogation was made, to which the same reply was given. Then "that tattva, i.e., the perception of nothingness, is the way to immortality," said the sage. The king did not perceive the truth, and suspecting the sage to be an imposter, ordered him to be buried alive. A pit was dug in the ground, into which the sage was placed. The ground was then covered with the dung of elephants and horses. It was then fenced with thorny trees, so that nobody could take him out. Twelve years after this event his pupil Kṛṣṇ-ācārya, when proceeding to the place called Kadali Kṣētra, visited Cāṭigrāma. His two pupils Badala and Mahila at his instance shewed some miracles to the king, and impressed him with the extreme holiness of their teacher. Being likewise asked for the secrets of immortality by Göpī Candra, Kṛṣṇ-ācārya whispered into his ears the same mantra which was given him by Bālapāda. The king, remembering it, said he had heard the same thing once before, and told the same story. Kṛṣṇ-ācārya informed the monarch that nobody else knew the mantra except his own Guru, i.e., Bālapāda, the sage of Jalandhara whom he had buried alive. The king became penitent and They both went over the grave and exhumed the greatly frightened. sage. Being in a state of suspended animation in  $y\bar{o}ga$ , he was alive. He complained of extreme hunger and thirst, having had no food or drink for twelve years. When brought out, he rested his two arms on the heads of Kṛṣṇ-ācārya's pupils, named Dhama and Dhuma, and took some food. The king prayed for forgiveness, which was granted to him on condition that he renounced the world and adopted the life of an ascetic. After staying for six months in Cātigrāma in a cavern in the hills, he proceeded to Rāmēçvar-ārāma in the south of India.

Cāṭigrāma was an imporṭant city of Bengal in that early period. The country to the south of Tripura and north of Rakhan (Arakan) was Ramma (Sanskrit ramya), the land of the picturesque sceneries. It was the headquarters of Buddhism after the decline of Nālanda. In the city of Cāṭigrāma or Cāṭigāō there was a large Buddhist monastery called Paṇḍita-Vihāra. There the Buddhist Pandits used to hold religious controversies with the Tīrthikas (Brāhmaṇas.) Once when a disputation took place, the leader of the Buddhists, at the suggestion of an old woman, wore a cap pointed like a thorn, at the time of the controversy. He came out victorious. To commemorate that

triumph, the Buddhists of Magadha kept up the use of the conical pointed cap. In Tibet it is called Pan-shva (pan 'Pandit' and shva in Tibetan 'a cap'), meaning 'the Pandit's cap.' The Lamas of Tibet, who belong to the Mahāyāna School of Magadha, use the pointed cap on al religious occasions. Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller, took a model of the Pan-shva from the grand Lama of Tibet who visited Peking at the invitation of the great Emperor Kublai Khān, and presented it to His Holiness the Pope.

About the middle of the 10th century the great Buddhist Tāntrik sage Tila-yōgī <sup>9</sup> was born in Cāṭigāō. The hierarch of Magadha, Naratōpa, visited Cāṭigrāma and took vows from Tila-yōgī. Marpa Lochava, the founder of the red hat school of Tibet, was a pupil of Naratōpa, and Milarapa, the renowned Siddha (saint) of Tibet, was Marpa's pupil.

In 1200 A.D. Pandit Çākya Çrībhadra of Kaçmīr visited the great monasteries of Ōḍantapurī and Vikramaçilā. He witnessed the destruction of those Vihāras by the Turuṣka (Muhammadan) army and the wholesale massacre of the monks. He fled to a place called Jagadhala in Ōṭivisa (Orissa), when further ravages were being done to Buddhism in Magadha by the Turuṣkas. Three years after, in 1203, he visited Tibet, and there introduced the system of initiative vow which is called Panchan Domgyun. Some of the Buddhist Pandits of Magadha fled towards Nēpāl, to the south-west and south, and also towards Arkhan <sup>10</sup> (Arakan), Muñad (Burmah), Kambōja (Cambodia) and other places. From the rise of the Sēna Dynasty to its downfall, when under the orders of Lawang Sēna (probably Lakṣmaṇa Sēna) some Buddhist Bhikṣus served as messengers, the country called Antara Vidēha was overrun by the Tīrthikas, Mlēcchas and the Turuṣkas.

About this time some foolish Yōgīs, who were followers of the Bud dhist Yōgī Gau-rakṣa, became Çivaite Samnyāsīs. There remained only

<sup>9</sup> หิ้นรุนัส หิ ขิ นาลิ । คะ หิ้คพ र्ट र्स म र्यो คัพ ย นั้น के เล้า के दे के के कि एक स्वर्ण के दे के कि एक स्वर्ण के कि

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(Pagsam Jon-Zan, 112.

a few Buddhists at Natasva. After that time the Rājas of the Sēna family became vassals of the Turuska kings. They acted according to the commands of the Turuska kings. They respected the Bud-Particularly in the time of Buddha Sēna, Rāhula Crībhadra, Bhūmi Crībhadra, Upāya Crībhadra and others performed Buddhist religious service. They had a limited number of followers and devotees. There were at that time the Acaryas Karuna Çribhadra, and Munindra Cribhadra and others who also worked with a few fol-About a hundred years after the time of Pratīta Sēna, 11 Cagala Rāja, probably the most powerful king of Cāṭigāō, rose to eminence in Bengal. His power was felt all over the country extending from Bengal to Delhi. He was devoted to Brāhmanism. His wife, being a Buddhist, induced him to repair some of the ruined Vihāras of Magadha and to perform religious service at Vajrāsana (Bōdhi Gayā) and Nālanda, and particularly to rebuild the upper storeys of the great nine storeyed Gandhola of Bodhi Gayā. He re-established the worship of Buddha there by inviting a learned Pandit like Çāriputra. From the death of this Rāja (Cagala) up to this year (Earth-dragon year according to the chronology of Tibet) three hundred years have elapsed. Afterwards in Ōṭivisa (Orissa) Mukunda Dēva (Dharma Rāja), who favoured Buddhism, became powerful. His power extended up to Maga-He too did some service to the cause of Buddhism. death up to this time one hundred and seventy-eight years have passed.

Towards the East, Buddhism spread more and more than before. After the downfall of Magadha most of the learned sages went towards the land of the Kōkī. Since that time the Rājas Çōbhajāta, Simha-jaṭī and others established many Buddhist religious institutions in their dominions. The religion of Buddha having spread there, the Pandit Vana Ratna and others visited Tibet from there (Cāṭigāō). In later

times Rāja Babla Sundara sent a number of Pandits to the Siddha Çānti Gupta, when he was residing in the country of Khagēndra in Dekhan. They returned with a large number of Mantra works to Cāṭigāō. His four sons, Candra Vāhana, Atīta Vāhana, Bāla Vāhana, and Sundara hachi, patronized Buddhism. The first reigned in Rakhan (Arakan), the second ruled in the land of the Cakmas (Chittagong Hill Tracts), the third became the king of Muñad (Burmah), and the fourth ruled over Naṁgaṭa (the Hill Tracts of Assam, Kachar and Tripura). Babla Sundara, it seems, was the king of Tripura and Cāṭigrāma (Chittagong). 13

With respect to the 'Pandit's cap' (Panzva-rtse rin), mentioned above (page 25), the following information is available.

Dr. Waddell in his work on "The Buddhism of Tibet" has given a very interesting description of the Lamaist hats and cawls. "The majority of the hats, he writes, are of an Indian type, a few only being Chinese or Mongolian. The two most typical hats are believed by the Lamas to have been brought from India by the Buddhist Saint Padma Sambhana, the founder of Lamaism, and his coadjutor, Çānti Rakṣita, in the eighth century. And both of these hats are essentially of an Indian pattern. The red hat, of the great Pandits Panchen zva dmar is alleged

(Pagsam Jon-Zań, 133.)

(Pagsam Jon-Zan, 124)

to have been brought from India the foundation of Lamaism. Its shape is essentially that of the ordinary cap used in the colder parts of India during the winter, with lappets coming over the cap and the nape of the neck, which lappets are folded up as an outer brim to the cap in the hot part of the day. Such a cap is often worn by Indian ascetics when travelling in the winter time. It is quite probable that this kind of cap was introduced either by Padma Sambhana, Çānti Rakṣita or Atiça (Dîpamkara) into Tibet from Magadha. From the account of the origin of the Pan-zva rtse rin (called in Waddell's list Panchen snerin) quoted from Pagsam Jon-zań, it appears that the Buddhist Yōgīs and Pandits used caps either during their residence in the monastery or at the time of travel. It is very probable that the cap originated in Udyāna, the country from which both Padma Sambhana and Bālapāda came. The latter or earlier Buddhist Pandits who visited Cātigrāma must have introduced the use of caps among the Buddhist Pandits who were called Mahantas. Pilgrims from Kaçmir and the Panjab still visit Sītākuṇḍa which has been a holy place both to the Brāhmans and Buddhists from very early time. In describing Panchen snerin Dr. Waddell observes:-It is only worn with these longtails by the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, the Gahdan Khri-rinpo-chē, and the Tibetan Lama King or regent, during the assembly mass and empowering. Pan-zva rtse rin, 14 that is the Pandits cap with long or pointed top is generally made with the top point bent a little like a thorn of a rose, symbolical of penetration and piercing.

The name Paṇḍita Vihāra and the story of disputation with the Tīrthīkas (Brāhmaṇas) goes to show that Chittagong was place of learning sixteen centuries ago if not earlier still.

<sup>14</sup> Pan-zva rtse rin means the long pointed cap of the Pandits. Pan or Panchen, means great Pandits, zva cap, rtse 'point' (Skt. agra), and rin 'long.'